

March 2004

GOOD GRIEF



ST. JOHN HOSPICE

A Newsletter For and About Grief Support

Dear Hospice Friends and Families,

As you continue to cope with your grief you may find well-meaning friends who give you advice, usually in the form of clichés. Most of this usually causes us to feel worse, to feel guilty, rather than to feel better. This month's article from the Grief Recovery Institute deals with "Killer Cliches".



I hope you will realize that grief cannot be completed by a simple cliché. Rather it is a growth into a new relationships. It is the desire of St. John Hospice for you to experience healing from your loss. Please let us know if we can be of service to you and consider attending one of our support groups.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael N. Chapman".

Michael Chapman, MA, TLLP

Bereavement Coordinator

St. John Hospice

586-723-9590

Michael.chapman@stjohn.org

www.stjohn.org/hospice

PS: Please view our web site, www.stjohn.org/hospice to read past months articles and to get more information.

“Killer Clichés” About Loss

by Russell Friedman & John W. James of The Grief Recovery Institute

We have all been educated on how to acquire things. We have been taught how to get an education, get a job, buy a house, etc. There are colleges, universities, trade schools, and technical schools. You can take courses in virtually anything that might interest you.

What education do we receive about dealing with loss? What school do you go to learn to deal with the conflicting feelings caused by significant emotional loss? Loss is so much more predictable and inevitable than gain, and yet we are woefully ill-prepared to deal with loss.

One of the most damaging killer clichés about loss is “time heals all wounds.” When we present open lectures on the subject of Grief Recovery®, we often ask if anyone is still feeling pain, isolation, or loneliness as the result of the death of a loved one 20 or more years ago. There are always several hands raised in response to that question. Then we gently ask, “if time is going to heal, then 20 years still isn’t enough?”

While recovery from loss does take some time, it need not take as much time as you have been led to believe. Recovery is totally individual, there is no absolute time frame. Sometimes in an attempt to conform to other people’s time frames, we do ourselves great harm. This idea leads us to another of the killer clichés, “you should be over it by now.”

It is bad enough that well-meaning, well intentioned friends attack us with killer clichés, but then we start picking on ourselves. We start believing that we are defective or somehow deficient because we haven’t recovered yet.

If we take just the two killer clichés we’ve mentioned so far, we can see that they have something in common. They both imply that a non-action will have some therapeutic or recovery value. That by waiting, and letting some time pass, we will heal. Let’s add a third cliché to the batch, “you have to keep busy.” Many grievors follow this incorrect advice and work two or three jobs. They fill their time with endless tasks and chores. At the end of any given day, asked how they feel, invariably they report that their heart still feels broken; that all they accomplished by staying busy was to get exhausted.

Now, with only three basic killer clichés we can severely limit and restrict our ability to participate in effective recovery. It is not only that people around us tell us these clichés, in an attempt to help, but we ourselves learned and practiced these false beliefs for most of our lives. It is time for us to learn some new and helpful beliefs to assist us in grieving and completing relationships that have ended or changed.

QUESTION: I have heard that it takes two years to “get over” the death of a loved one; five years to “get over” the death of a parent; and you never “get over” the death of a child. Is this true?

ANSWER: Part of the problem is the phrase “get over.” It is more accurate to say that you would never forget a child who had died, anymore than you would ever forget a parent or a loved one. Another part of the problem is one of those killer clichés we talked about, that time, of itself, is a recovery action. Although recovery from loss does take some time, it is the actions within time that lead to successful recovery.

The primary goal of Grief Recovery® is to help you “grieve and complete” relationships that have ended or changed. Successful Grief Recovery® allows you to have fond memories not turn painful and helps you retake a happy and productive place in your own life. In addition, you regain the ability to begin new relationships, rather than attempting to replace or avoid past relationships.

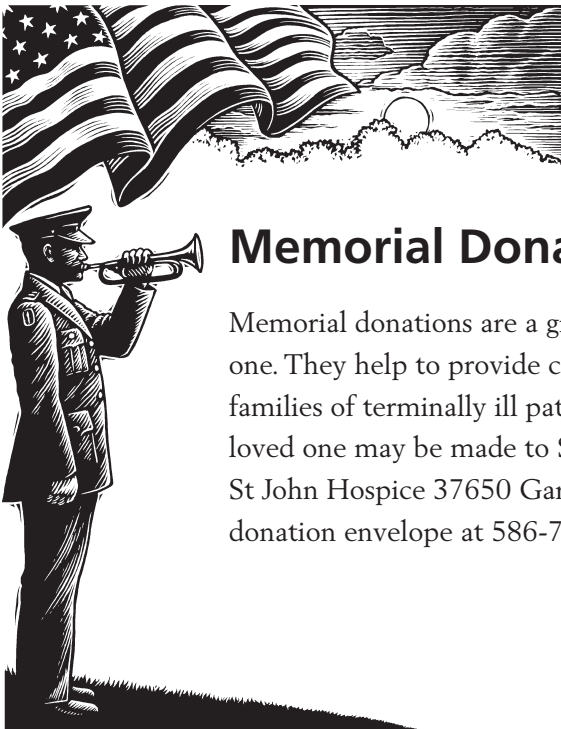
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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In recovering from grief, many people find it therapeutic to help others in similar circumstances. St John Hospice offers many opportunities to volunteer and invest your energy in helping others. Being a volunteer gives a great sense of purpose and satisfaction. Volunteers with St. John Hospice perform a variety of activities for patients. Areas of volunteer support may include:

- Serving as a patient companion and providing caregiver relief.
- Providing light housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping or other errands.
- Offering bereavement care by making phone calls, participating in support groups, or making home visits.
- Providing office assistance and support.

All interested volunteers are provided with training. If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with St. John Hospice, please call our volunteer coordinator at 800-248-2298.



Memorial Donations

Memorial donations are a great way to honor the memory of your loved one. They help to provide continued, quality, compassionate care to families of terminally ill patients. Donations in memory of your loved one may be made to St. John Hospice. Please send your donation to St John Hospice 37650 Garfield, Clinton Twp, MI 48036. Or call us for a donation envelope at 586-723-9590. Thank You.

ANNOUNCING GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP AT PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

St. John Hospice provides support groups for surviving caregivers and family members who have lost a loved one. The groups are free and open to the public. For more information or to register for one of the groups please call 586-723-9590.

CLINTON TOWNSHIP GROUP

Grief Support Group
37650 Garfield
(On Garfield just north of Metro Parkway (16 mile)
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-723-9590

Meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month; 2-3:30 p.m.
Group Leader: Rev Michael Chapman, MA, TLLP
Bereavement Coordinator

ROSEVILLE GROUP

G.O.A.L. (Going On After Loss)
18303 E. Ten Mile Road, Suite 300
(On 10 Mile between Kelly and Gratiot in the
Pointe East Office Center. Last building on the left)
Roseville, MI 48066
586-723-9590

Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 2-3:30 p.m.
Group Leader: Jamie Flowers, MA, Spiritual Care Counselor

RICHMOND GROUP

Learning to Live with Loss and Change
Grief Support Group
St Augustine Parish Educational Building
68035 Main St.
Richmond, MI
586-727-5215 ext.13

Meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month from 6:30-8 p.m.
Group Leader: Sally Sutley, MSW
Medical Social Worker

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

Meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month
2nd Wednesday meets from 4-6 p.m.
4th Wednesday meets from 10 a.m. - Noon

Group Leader: Rev. Andre Carr Spiritual Care Counselor

